

TWELFTH EDITION.

# JOHN JUSTIFIED:

## A REPLY

TO THE

“FIGHT IN DAME EUROPA’S SCHOOL.”

SHOWING THAT

“There are always Two Sides to Every Question.”

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“FLOREAT JUSTITIA.”

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## P R E F A C E .

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“THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO SIDES TO EVERY QUESTION,”

BEING A REPLY TO

“THE FIGHT IN DAME EUROPA’S SCHOOL,”

A BROCHURE, in which Europe is the School kept by Dame Europa, and the five great Powers, Monitors, under the names of Louis, William, Aleck, Joseph, and John, whose business it is to keep order in the School. These five Monitors have gardens, in which they have built summer-houses and tool-houses, and which they cultivate, and are allowed to sell the produce to each other.

William is accused of having long coveted two small plots in Louis’s garden, and of having put himself in training, and of having taken lessons in boxing; and when he thought himself strong enough to fight Louis, of having tried to place a cousin of his in a garden adjoining Louis’s, which seemed to belong to no one just then (but which he knew Louis

would not allow), for the express purpose of picking a quarrel with him; and although William, on being remonstrated with, forbade his cousin taking this spare garden, Louis thought himself insulted, and challenged William to fight. They did fight, and Louis got the worst of it; and Mrs. Europa thought that John ought to have interfered and prevented their fighting, and rated him soundly for not having done so, telling him that he was so selfish and so fond of his money, amassed by selling things he made in his tool-house, that he thought of nothing else, and took no care now of the peace of the School, and was so taken up with his money-making as to have forgotten how to fight, so that none of the other Monitors cared for him, or feared him, so the Dame threatened to take his Monitorship away from him; but some of the little boys begged her not to do so, as John had been very kind in acting as sponge to both of the combatants, and had washed the blood off their faces, and bathed their black eyes; on which the Dame relented, so far as to let John off with a good lecture.

But this reply shows, that

“There are two sides to every question.”

## There are Always Two Sides to Every Question.



THAT same evening Mrs. EUROPA had invited an old friend and confidante to take tea with her in her private room. The good Dame was so full of the events of the morning, that she fidgeted and fidgeted until a break in the conversation enabled her to unburden her mind and enter into a minute detail of all that was passing in the School, but as her friend made no remark, Mrs. Europa said, "I see you think I was too lenient to John and ought to have taken the monitorship from him, or even to have expelled him from the school. Do say what, in your opinion, I ought to have done."

"Well," said her friend, "as you ask me for my opinion, I will give it you, but before doing so, I should like you to answer one or two questions. Have you not always found John honest and truthful and true to any engagement he makes?"

"Well, said the Dame, I must allow that he is what you say, and even when this quarrel between Louis and William began, he manfully took the part of a very little boy who was in

danger of having his garden run over, if not taken from him, by William or Louis."

"Exactly so, and does he not always take the part of the weakest, if he thinks him in the right? and when he does interfere, does he not do so heartily, never sparing the money you say he is so fond of, or caring for hard knocks and kicks, of which he manages to get plenty, although I must say he generally gives as good as he gets?"

"Yes, that is very true, and I remember now, that when some years ago there was a terrible scamp in the school, who took possession of the garden that Louis now has, and set himself up for a monitor, and not content with that, wanted to make all the other monitors obey him, and made such a disturbance in the school that I was nearly driven wild, he also attacked the monitors who then held the places that William and Joseph now have, and so drubbed them that they could not show themselves for a long time. He then cast a longing eye on John's garden, but found he could not get across the water to it, and even if he could he saw plainly that he would never be able to get back again, for John is, I must own, a sturdy fellow, and he keeps such a fierce bulldog that every one is afraid to venture into his garden against his will. Now Nap, for that was the name of this bully of a boy, finding



John's garden was not to be had, suddenly started off and attacked a big, burly, bearish boy, who held the garden Aleck now has; but there he burnt his fingers, for the big boy set fire to his summer house rather than let Nap have it, and so singed the scamp that he was never worth much afterwards. All this time John had been helping the other monitors with all his might, he gave and lent them his money and attacked Nap so fiercely, pummelling him in the back to draw him off from his attacks upon the others, and then fighting him face to face and giving him such a drubbing that Master Nap had to run from the school and never troubled it again; oh, I remember it all well now, and John certainly did behave like a man then."

"And was not your school quieter after that than it had been for many long years before? And did it not keep quiet until Aleck's predecessor in his garden wanted to bully that little dark boy, when John came forward and with the help of Louis gave that rough cub of a boy such a licking as has kept him quiet ever since, though I hear he is beginning to get unruly again?"

"Yes," said the Dame, "that is true also."

"Then," rejoined her friend, "you must admit that you owed the quiet that reigned in your school for so many years, and which saved you from so

much trouble and anxiety, chiefly to John, did you not?"

"I am willing to admit it," replied Mrs. Europa, "but why did he allow the disturbance in the school to break out again now? that's why I blame him."

"Softly, my good friend," said her companion; "you admit that it was owing to John's exertions that your school was so orderly for so many years, but do you forget what it cost John to do all he did for the peace of the school? Thinking so much of his money as you say he does, you cannot deny that he spent it liberally then, and scattered it in all directions, wherever he thought it might be of use, and, in fact, that he did not hesitate to get greatly into debt, so reckless was he of what he spent; but he did it with a good will, and took cuffs and blows with a good will, too; and what did he get for it? Not much thanks, I imagine; for when all the row was over, the other monitors soon forgot what John had done for them, and began to envy him his good name and the position he had rightly earned to hold among them, and they abused him and wanted very much—at least one of them did—to take his garden from him; but they were afraid of his Bull-dog, who began to show his teeth when he saw them stalking about on the other

side of his stream and making as though they wished to cross over. Now, just think, my good Mrs. Europa, was this the way to make John interfere in their quarrels and fight their battles for them again, and spend more of his money, that he and his class work so hard for, and get more cuffs and knocks, and then be abused for his pains, and possibly when he had worn himself out by helping others, and became weak and tired, some of the others who had taken it easily would come on and pitch into him, and even perhaps try and get into his garden and rob his tool house and his money box? No, John—for I know the boy well, and like him for all his rough ways—has got wiser than that now, and does not see why he is to be always interfering in other boys' quarrels and get no thanks for it. He is willing to take his share in keeping the school quiet, and that is all you have a right to expect of him, and he was willing to do so in this last quarrel."

"Then why didn't he? tell me that."

"He did try to persuade them not to fight, but Louis told him it was a *private* quarrel of long standing between him and William, and had nothing to do with the rest of the school, and that he had no business to interfere."

"Yes, he did that; but when he found that

they would fight, why did he not step in with his great broad back and make them give up fighting?"

"Why did not *who* do this?"

"Why, John, to be sure; who else was to do it?"

"Oh! I thought there were *five* monitors, and that only *two* of them were fighting, so there must have been three looking on."

"Well, what of that?"

"Why, if there were three monitors looking on, of whom John was one, why were the other two not to interfere as well as John?"

"Why——why——why——because, of course, it was John's business to interfere; he always did so before, and the others would have been sure to have done so now if he had set them the example."

"I think I have heard you say," replied the Dame's friend, "that for some time past John had lost all his influence in the school; that he was supposed to care only for his turning lathe and his money-box, that he had become sluggish and stupid, lost all his activity, and got fat and flabby and quite unfit to fight (although they would find their mistake if they dared to molest him, for he can fight as well as ever if forced to do so), and that none of the other monitors cared for or feared him?"

"Yes, I have often heard them say so."

"Then why was he to put himself more forward than the others in this instance? If they did not think it their business to interfere, and prevent Louis and William fighting, why was it John's business more than their's? When two boys have got a grudge against each other, and are determined to fight, fight they will some time or other, do what you will to prevent them. No, my good Mrs. Europa, I think you are unjust in this case, and hard upon John; you should at least have called up Aleck and Joseph, and lectured them also; they have been lookers on, or neutrals, as they call themselves, as well as John."

"Well, but why has he helped Louis by sending him over those stones to pelt William with?"

"You must remember that John and his class are very industrious boys, and make a number of things which you allow them to sell to the other boys. So as John could not prevent the quarrel, he said, I can't stop from selling either of you anything you want to buy from me, merely because you are fighting with each other, it would be unkind; so either of you may have what you require. Louis wanted some stones; so John sent him a few, for he had very few at hand; and William has been very angry at this,

as he says it is helping Louis to pelt him. But it so happened that William did not want anything just then from John, and if he had done so, he could not have got it, for you see Louis has much the larger boat of the two, and obliges William to keep his boat locked up in his boat-house, whilst Louis can fetch anything he wants; so that had John made a *fresh* rule *now*, Louis would have complained that he was favouring William at his expense, and that it would not be acting fairly to both parties. If when this fight is over, all the monitors agree to make a rule that if there is a fight among any of them, none of the others shall supply either of the combatants with anything they may want, it would be a *very just* rule; but to alter an old-established rule *now*, which would affect one party and not the other, would not be fair, and I think William will see this when the fight is over. But for one stone that John sent, those sharp boys in the school across the water sent him a cart load, yet they call themselves neutrals also. But I hear no complaints against them; it is always *John* should have done this, and *John* should not have done that. Poor John, he is always the one to be blamed. Fortunately, he has good broad shoulders and can bear it. He goes on in his own quiet way, and does what he thinks right,

whether he gets abused for it or not, and even in this case, although he could not interfere, he has done his best in 'using the sponge' and binding up the wounds of both parties."

"Well," said Mrs. Europa at last, "you have put the case very strong for John. I had no idea he had so staunch a friend. I have been so in the habit of always hearing him abused, and of being told that everything he said or did was wrong, even by parties in his own class, that I supposed it must be so; but I fear, in this instance, I have done him wrong, and been hard upon him, and so I will tell him to-morrow before all the other boys, and I will make what amends to him I can by replacing him in his former position of, if not the first, at all events one of the most honest, and disinterested, and well-meaning monitors in the school; for, as you justly observed, my dear friend—

*"There are always two sides to every question."*

"Now," said her friend, "since you have done justice to honest John, there is one other little point in the story you told me on which I wish to say a word or two. You said that William had long coveted two little plots in Louis's garden, and that almost from the time when Nap gave him such a licking, he had put himself in training and taken lessons in boxing, so that he might

take these two coveted plots by force whenever he felt strong enough to do so, and that he had put his cousin up to take that spare garden near Louis's for the express purpose of picking a quarrel with Louis. Now, I don't quite know how you have found that out, but surely you must be aware that ever since Nap's time his class have always coveted a little water-course that runs through a part of William's garden, and that Louis has long been waiting for an excuse to quarrel with William and take it from him. You say that Louis was in a great rage even after William had said that his cousin should not take that spare garden, and pretended to be insulted; of course he was in a rage, because William had taken away the cause of offence, and Louis feared that the opportunity of quarrelling with him would pass away; for it so happened that Louis had also been in training, and thought he had found out some wonderful new way of hitting, which was so severe and dreadful that no one could stand up against it. He was so proud of this, so certain of its deadly effects, and so afraid that the secret would leak out, and that William would hear of it and learn how to employ it as well as he, that he was most anxious to begin the fight at once, and would listen to no reason, but called upon William to make a promise that he



knew he would not make, and that he did not wish him to make. Poor fellow ! he has suffered sadly for his folly, and I pity him with all my heart."

"But if William has beaten him so, and punished him so severely, why is he not satisfied with the drubbing he has given him ? and not go on hitting him now he is down."

"Well, you see it stands thus, William did not wish to fight if he were let alone. He had plenty to do just now putting his garden in order, so he said if he was to fight now, he would fight so as to secure his not being attacked again by Louis or any of his class. Between the watercourse in William's garden and Louis's garden there are some high and strong walls, which belonged to Louis, and which William has now taken from him, and which he is determined to keep to prevent Louis getting over them and taking his watercourse at any future time. So William says to Louis, if you will give me permanently those walls I will stop beating you, as I cannot take your word that when you are well and strong again you will not wish to fight me once more, I must have some 'material guarantee,' such as these walls, that you will leave me in peace for the future. Poor Louis had, however, before this been so mauled that he had been carried away ;

16 "*The Fight at Dame Europa's School.*"

but those who now keep his garden say, 'No, we will not give you one stone of these walls, or one inch of ground on which they stand.' So what is to be done? William has been terribly bruised and hurt in this fight, and now that he has beaten Louis, who was the aggressor, he cannot be expected to let him off scot free, or not to secure himself from being again molested, or from having his watercourse, and that part of his garden through which it runs, taken from him at any future time, for you know he and his class rave about their watercourse, they make songs upon it and are so fond of it that I believe they would rather all fight till they died sooner than have it taken from them; so until Louis's successors find they must give in, or can manage to take the stone walls back again from William, I fear there is no hope of the fighting ending, or of any peace and quiet for you, my good Mrs. Europa, for here again, you see,—

"There are always two sides to every question."

*December, 1870.*

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